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DISCOURSE

DELIVERED,

9 NOVEMBER, 1817,

THE LORD'S DAY AFTER THE COMPLETION OF A CENTURY FROM THE GATHERING OF THE CHURCH IN

7551.428

BROOKLINE,

BY JOHN PIERCE, A. M.

THE FIFTH MINISTER OF BROOKLINE.

The fashion of this world passeth away. — THE APOSTLE PAUL.

One generation passeth away; and another generation cometh. — SOLOMON.

BOSTON,

PRINTED BY JOHN ELIOT, NO. 5 COURT STREET.

1818.

The Author affectionately dedicates the following plain matters of fact, with the observations suggested by them, to the beloved church and people of his charge. They may find interest in details, which to others would appear tediously minute.

He has omitted many things, appropriate to the subject, because they are already published in his sermon, delivered, 24 Nov. 1805, on the completion of a century from the incorporation of the town. To this, and particularly to an improved edition, contained in the collections of the Historical Society, Vol. II. New Series, beginning with p. 140, he begs leave to refer for information and authorities, relating to the church and town of Brookline, which he has neglected to specify in this discourse.

He cannot dismiss the subject, without expressing the devout wish, that his people may be as anxious to imitate the virtues of their fathers, as they have been to preserve this tribute to their memory.

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CHURCH CENTURY DISCOURSE.

Zechariah I. 5.

YOUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY? AND THE PROPHETS, DO THEY LIVE FOREVER?

Every reflecting mind at times recurs to past generations and events. A melancholy pleasure is derived from examining the place of our fathers' sepulchres, from holding converse, as it were, with the spirits of the deceased, from visiting the scenes of their former toils, sufferings, and enjoyments, and from contemplating the constant, yet gradual changes in the face of nature and of society.

The associations suggested by such inquiries are adapted to produce something beyond mere amusement. They are fraught with useful instruction. They furnish us with facts important in the conduct of life. They enable us to discern, and thus caution us to avoid the errours of those, who have gone before us. They bring to view whatever was praiseworthy in their characters, and thus gently allure us to imitation.

Such reflections, properly conducted, bring home to our consciences the most forcible demonstration of the frailty of human life, and the variable and transitory nature of all earthly possessions. They assure us, that changes similar to those, which we contem-

plate in our predecessors, and in many of our cotemporaries, await us, our persons, families, and property; and they thus silently, yet powerfully admonish us to live with reference to infinitely higher objects, than this world can afford.

Accordingly the sacred writers frequently direct our minds to such a retrospect. It is suggested by the inquiries of the prophet. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?"

In the preceding verse Zechariah reminds the Jews of the transgressions of their ancestors. The queries in the text are designed to convey the sentiment, that, though their fathers are dead, and they, who ministered to them, are, in like manner, departed; yet the truths, enforced by their ministry, are the same; and it is of infinite importance, that they should observe them.

I have thought, that the solemn inquiries of the prophet are peculiarly appropriate, at the completion of a century from the organization of this church.

It appears by our records, that the church of Christ in this place was gathered, 26 October, 1717. If we allow for difference of style, a century from this date was completed, on the sixth of November, which was the last thursday.

As then, since the last Lord's day, so important an epoch has arrived in the history of our church, may not the present opportunity be seriously and profitably employed in such reflections, as the text and the occasion unitedly suggest?

"Your fathers, where are they?" Several successive generations, it is well known, have passed away, since the formation of this church. How many more then, from the earliest settlements in this place, which

were nearly a century sooner, have gone the way, whence they shall not return?

We have historical documents to prove, that this town was inhabited, within three years of the incorporation of Boston, of which, for more than seventy years, it formed a part. Yet so few were their numbers, and so moderate their circumstances, that we hear of no place of worship, within the present limits of this town, for several generations.

Had our fathers contented themselves with lay preaching, like many of the present day, they might have had publick worship among themselves. But it appears to have been a fixed determination, from which they never departed, to appropriate no place to this purpose, till they could provide for a regularly educated pastor from the school of the prophets.

Accordingly, for the greater part of a century, they cheerfully submitted to the inconvenience of attending publick worship with the first parish in Roxbury, in such numbers, that a fifth part of the meetinghouse was devoted to their use.

On the incorporation of this town, 13 November, 1705, O. S. measures were soon projected for the erection of a house of worship, and the organization of a church.

Owing however to various obstacles, they were not carried into effect, till 10 November, 1714, when the first meetinghouse was raised, of the same dimensions with the one then standing in the South West of Roxbury.*

On 10 December, 1716, Mr. James Allen of Roxbury received a call to be the first minister of this town.

* The Rev. Joseph Jackson preached the two last sermons in this house of worship belonging to the 2d parish in Roxbury, 25 April, 1773.

Preparatory to his settlement, a covenant was prepared, subscribed, and read in publick, and the church gathered by the Rev. Ebenezer Thayer, the first minister of the second church in Roxbury.

This step is agreeable to the general usage of congregational churches in our own, and other countries. It is recommended in the Platform of church discipline, framed by our fathers, in 1648. In this they say, "This form" of a church "is a visible covenant, agreement, or consent, whereby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the church covenant."*

During the reign of papal usurpation, no such liberty was enjoyed. All were obliged to maintain their faith, and regulate their practice in religious matters by the decrees of the Roman see. This hierarchy not only claimed an authority paramount to the holy scriptures; but also assumed the power to dictate to the consciences of its subjects in all matters both of doctrine and discipline.

The third century is, this season, completed, since the intrepid Martin Luther made the first successful stand against the usurpations of the Romish church. Accordingly, the churches in the Lutheran communion, as well as some of other sects, agreed to observe the thirty first day of October last, as a jubilee to commemorate the emancipation of christians from the thraldom of papacy. If we consider, from what tyrannical impositions the glorious reformation has helped to rescue its adherents, and what exalted privileges it confers on those, who enjoy it in its purity,

* Chap. iv. § 3.

and are sensible of its full value, we can conceive of no higher ground of religious gratitude, and no fitter subject of joyful celebration.

But so imperfect are the best institutions of mortals, and so gradual is human improvement, that Luther stopped far short of the progress, which has since been made in what he so magnanimously and gloriously began. The same remark may be made of various churches, which are improvements upon Lutheranism.

Our scrupulous forefathers agreed in doctrine with the church of England. But such dominion did she assume over their consciences, in matters of discipline, that they separated from her communion, and subsequently from the land of their nativity, to enjoy unmolested their unquestionable and inalienable rights.

Yet such is the inconsistency of human nature, that the rigours, which had been exercised upon them, and of which they so justly complained, when freed from the restraints of others, they persisted in imposing upon all, who dared to vary from their faith or practice.

The rights of concience have since been better understood, and more successfully maintained; and, I am happy to add, that our church was founded upon the basis, and has uniformly acted upon the principles of the two grand doctrines of the reformation, the sufficiency of the scriptures, and the right of private judgment.

The original covenant of this church is short, comprehensive, and, in a great measure, scriptural. It recognises no peculiarities of sect and party. It proposes no result, or confession, or creed of any council, or synod, of any leader of a sect, or of any body of men, as a term of union. Its foundation is so broad, that it

offers communion to christians of every denomination. Its leading engagement is "to walk together, as a church of Christ, in all the ways of his worship, *according to his word.*" Proposing *the word of God*, as the great rule of faith, it does not bind the consciences of men to explain it according to any human standard whatever.

By a different procedure, by requiring assent to intricate and unintelligible creeds of man's invention, some of our churches have so narrowed the terms of communion, that none, but persons of a single sect exclusively, can conscientiously subscribe to them; and thus some scrupulous christians have been virtually excluded from church fellowship.

In reviewing the ecclesiastical proceedings of our fathers, it is proper to add, that this church, from its organization to the present time, has proceeded upon the plan of the baptismal covenant. In other words, it has admitted adults, on their assent to the church covenant, to baptism for themselves and their children, although they may be detained by conscientious scruples from the Lord's supper.

This practice, it is suspected, has been misunderstood. What has contributed to fix the erroneous impression is the denomination of half-way covenant, as it has been improperly called, when owned, as a term of baptism.

This phrase seems to assume the supposition of a middle course between christianity and infidelity. But such a sentiment, it is manifest, derives no countenance from scripture or reason. The fact is, our church, in accordance with others similarly constituted, admits persons to own the covenant, as a term of baptism, on the ground, that they are sincere in pro-

fessing it; or, in other words, that they are christians, in a judgment of charity, although detained by conscientious scruples from the table of the Lord. We accordingly never fail to state these principles clearly to such, as apply for this partial admission to christian privileges. We admonish them, that the ordinance of baptism is no less sacred, than the Lord's supper; that the covenant, which they make in the one case, is not only no less obligatory, than in the other; but that it is in substance precisely the same; that there are not therefore two distinct covenants, the one more solemn, or involving higher obligations, than the other. Hence we exhort them to enter upon their obligations understandingly, not merely to procure baptism for themselves, or their offspring, as a mere form; but with "purpose of heart" to live agreeably to their covenant vows; and to labour diligently and devoutly to remove the scruples, which hinder them from "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord."

Exceedingly different are the forms of constituting churches, and of admitting members. In order to church membership, some demand assent to the peculiarities, which distinguish them from every other sect. Others have no express covenant. Between these extremes there is an indefinite variety of modes and forms.

It is not a little remarkable, that our forefathers, with all their zeal for the peculiarities of their own faith and practice and discipline, in matters of religion, should admit, that the constitution of a church may be valid without a church covenant.*

* See the Platform of church discipline, Chap. iv. § 4.

It is manifest, that the scriptures lay down no precise rules in the formation of a church. As they are designed for all the countless varieties of taste, of disposition, of knowledge, of character, of forms of government, of mental powers, of means of information prevalent among mankind, the omission is doubtless wise and benevolent. All are left to form churches after the model best adapted to their own notions of right and of duty. For their guidance they have general principles, which they are allowed to apply to the circumstances of their situation.

Certain articles of compact are, for obvious reasons, proper in the formation of a church, as well as in the constitution of other societies. In every church provision should be made to confess Christ before men. On this our Saviour lays great stress. Attendance on publick worship does not amount to this confession; because by this act no pledge is given even of belief in christianity. We may go habitually to houses of publick worship from motives apart from a respect for the gospel, and yet violate no express engagement.

Every church should therefore be so constituted, as to invite and induce all, as far as possible, who believe in Christ, openly to profess allegiance to him, agreeably to the requisites of his gospel.

But care should be taken, in the compact adopted, that no sincere convert to christianity may justly scruple to enter into its obligations. For this reason, it is best, whenever a covenant is formed, that it should be expressed, as nearly as circumstances will admit, in the language of scripture.

Will you say, that this will open the door of fellowship too widely; because all sects profess to believe

the scriptures? If you find, that in this way undue advantage is taken, admonish the guilty of their faults; and, if you can reform them by no milder methods, excommunicate them. In this case you have equal advantages for redress, as if they subscribed the best guarded human formulary.

Will you allege, that, in subscribing a scriptural creed, some may practise evasions? This goes on the supposition of their dishonesty. But may they not with equal ease evade whatever the ingenuity of man can devise? Do we not in fact find, that the churches, which require the most explicit confessions of human invention, are most liable to evasions from their members?

The founders of this church, in the construction of their covenant, were careful not to descend into sectarian peculiarities. Nor have their successours, at any time, deviated from this primitive simplicity.

Still as it is, in some parts, the production of fallible men, it may be chargeable with imperfection. If therefore a single sentiment, contained in our covenant, should prove a stumbling block to one sincere disciple of Jesus, so as to prevent his admission into this church, in the name of our Master, let it be obliterated.

During the century from the organization of this church, there have been four hundred and eight members, one hundred and fifty-eight males, and two hundred and fifty females. This is an average of about four members, a year.

For the twenty-one years, in which your present pastor* has ministered in this place, there have been one hundred and five additions to this church, namely,

* He first preached, as a candidate, in this town, 2 October, 1796.

thirty-four males and seventy-one females, which make the exact average of five, a year.

With solemn emphasis may I inquire, "Your fathers, where are they?" For of the one hundred and eighty first members of this church every individual is released from the church militant on earth; and these comprise all, who were admitted, during the ministry of the three first pastors of this town, as well as some of the first, who were added under the ministry of my immediate predecessor.

Of all, who were admitted, before my ordination, but fifty-one are living. Of the one hundred and five added, during my ministry, ninety-three are now alive. So that of the four hundred and eight, comprised in the records of this church, one hundred and forty-four are living, and two hundred and sixty-four have gone to their long home.

During my ministration in this place, thirty members of this church have died in this town, namely, fifteen males and fifteen females; and, besides these, twenty occasional communicants. The whole number of deaths, during this period, of those, who originally joined this church, is sixty.

There are now in this town seventy-eight communicants belonging to this church, besides eight in Roxbury, making eighty-six, who statedly commune together. Besides these, there have been, this season, fifty-one occasional communicants from various other churches, making a total of one hundred and thirty-seven, who have communed together, this year.

In addition to the communicants, one hundred and fifty-one have owned the covenant, since the gathering of this church, with a view to the baptism of themselves, or their children.

The members originally composing this church, a century ago, were thirty-nine, seventeen males, and twenty-two females.* To whatever side I turn, I behold the lineal descendants of these pillars of our church, some of whom are members, and the children of members in uninterrupted succession from the organization of this body. In some instances there have been members of this church, for four and five generations in succession. In one case there are members of the sixth generation from an original member, and some of each inclusive generation have also been members. There are children of the seventh generation from one of the first members of this church. So rapidly does one generation pass away, while another generation cometh. Within the short period, which I am sketching, some, who were of consideration sufficient to belong to this church, have not only passed off the stage of life; but the greatest antiquaries among us can give no account even of the families, to which they belonged. So soon may we also be forgotten by the generations, which in quick succession will occupy our places.

Having made these remarks concerning the church in this place, I propose now to take a wider range; and from additional facts, which show the changes continually occurring, to illustrate our obligations, as transitory, yet immortal beings.

Seventy-seven years ago, which is as far back, as the memory of any one,† with whom I have convers-

* Appendix I.

† For many facts relating to the early history of this church and town, the author acknowledges himself indebted to Mr. John Goddard, a much respected member of this church, who died, 13 April, 1816, at the advanced age of 86. He was the son of John Goddard and the grandson of Joseph Goddard, both members of this church, the latter, one of its founders. He was a man of an uncommonly extensive observation, and with a memory proverbially accurate.

ed, in relation to the events in this place, extended, there were sixty-one houses in this town.* The probability is, that the number was nearly the same, at the gathering of the church, if not, for several years before. For, in the autumn of 1796, which was fifty-six years after the period aforementioned, there had been an increase of but eleven houses, making the whole number seventy-two.† Yet, since the time last stated, which is but twenty-one years, the houses have increased from seventy-two to ninety-seven, making the addition of more than a third of the former number.

A striking proof of the vicissitudes, to which all earthly things are subject, is the circumstance, that of the sixty-one places, owned in 1740, but twelve of the present occupants are lineal descendants from those, who possessed them, at that period.†

The baptisms on record, since the church was gathered, are nine hundred and seventy-one. It is however well known, that there are several omissions in the early history of the church. The average, for the last twenty-one years, has been about thirteen, a year, as there have been baptized, during that period, two hundred and sixty-seven, one hundred and thirty-eight males, and one hundred and twenty-nine females.

No complete account of marriages has been kept, previously to the ordination of your former minister, in 1760. From that time to the present, there have been two hundred and twenty-one marriages, of which ninety-four have been solemnized by your present pastor.

The statement of deaths, in like manner, extends no further back, than fifty-seven years. During that pe-

* Appendix II. † Appendix III.

riod, four hundred and eighty-two have been numbered with the dead.

For the last twenty-one years, two hundred and eight have deceased; one hundred and six males, and one hundred and two females. But, when we take into consideration the increase of population,* the deaths will not appear disproportionately numerous to former times.

In addition to the instances of mortality in this town, for the last twenty-one years, there have been nineteen in Roxbury in families, which worship with us.

Such have been the ravages of death, during the short period of my residence among you, that but few families have escaped his desolating progress.† Some appear to have been marked out, as his peculiar victims. Within one household, nine have been numbered with the dead.‡

It may serve to show the rapidity, with which one generation succeeds another, if I remark, that of the deaths in this place, which I have been called to witness, seventy-eight were from heads of families; and, in fourteen instances, both heads of families have departed this life.

Of those, who were voters, at the time of my call to the ministry, thirty-one are dead; while but twenty-three are now living in this town, who were voters here, at the period of my ordination.

In the families of tenants the changes have been peculiarly observable. Of the forty-eight families of this description, inhabitants of the town, this year, not

* By the census in 1800, the number was 605. In 1810, it was 784. Appendix IV.

† There has been a death in every house below the meeting-house but four; and most of these have been recently built.

‡ In the house belonging to Joseph White.

one was here so early, as the time of my ordination. In several houses they have succeeded each other, a number of times.*

But the fact, which perhaps more forcibly, than any other, illustrates the revolutions, to which we are subject, is, that there are but six families in the town, in which both heads are the same, and living in the same places, as they were twenty-one years ago. Of these four live above, and two below, our house of worship.

As then from the glance, which I have taken of our history, it sufficiently appears, that our "fathers" pass away, let us briefly inquire concerning "the prophets, do they live for ever?"

It is well known, that, during the century, there have been five pastors ordained in this place, three† of whom died here in the ministry; and that four of them have gone to give an account of their stewardship.

Within the same period, there have been in our parent town, twelve congregational churches; and

* In some instances there have been nine different families of tenants, most of them succeeding each other, in one house. The families of every description, at midsummer, this year, amounted to one hundred and thirteen.

† The remains of the two first lie deposited in the same tomb in our burial ground. The body of the Rev. Joseph Jackson, after the funeral solemnities, was carried to Boston, and laid in his family tomb. No epitaph is inscribed on the tomb of either of these ministers. The character of the last is delineated by the Rev. Jacob Cushing of Waltham, in the sermon at his funeral. No discourse is published on the death of the others. Some account will be found of the Rev. James Allen in the author's century discourse. Of the Rev. Cotton Brown, nothing was then known, but by oral tradition. He was minister here, not quite two years and a half. I have since ascertained, that the Rev. Dr. Cooper, who was his classmate at Harvard University, wrote his character, and says, "his genius had raised in his friends the fairest hopes, and given them just reason to expect in him one of the brighest ornaments of society, and a peculiar blessing to the church." See sketch of Haverhill by Leverett Saltonstall, Esq. of Salem in Historical Collections, Vol. IV. N. S. p. 143.

The average age of the three ministers, who died in this town, is 47 2-3.

these have enjoyed the labours of fifty-nine pastors, thirty-six of whom died in the ministry; seven are now living, who are not pastors of their original charges, and ten still minister to their people.

In the six contiguous towns of Charlestown, Dorchester, Boston, Roxbury, Brookline, and Chelsea, most of whose congregational churches compose the Boston Association, there have been, this century, twenty-two congregational churches, and ninety-two pastors, fifty-four of whom died in the ministry; twelve died out of the ministry; seven are now living, who do not minister to the first people of their charge; and nineteen are still actively engaged in the duties of the ministerial office. The additional congregational churches, within these limits, to those, which existed before, are nine; and the houses of worship erected, during this period, for congregationalists, twenty-five.

Of the fifty-four congregational ministers, who died, the past century, in the six aforementioned towns, precisely one third lived to be seventy years of age and upwards, and exactly a ninth part lived to eighty and upwards. The oldest was the Rev. Thomas Cheever of Chelsea, who died at the advanced age of ninety-three; while the youngest were the Rev. Cotton Brown of this place, the Rev. Joshua Paine and the Rev. Thomas Prentiss, both of Charlestown, all three of whom died at the age of twenty-five.*

But of this statement of facts illustrating the changes, which constantly take place, and which furnish irresistible evidence, that we also are rapidly

* Appendix V.

passing away, it is proper, that I suggest a suitable improvement.

1. The first sentiment, which should arise in our minds, at the historical review of this day, is gratitude to God for our present distinguished blessings.

There is a great and obvious improvement in your external circumstances.

There may not be more comparative wealth. But the lands are incalculably better cultivated. The buildings are much more elegant and commodious. The style of living is greatly advanced. Indeed better provision is made for the various comforts of life, than in the early settlement of this place.

It is not asserted, that these circumstances redound to the best good of each individual so favoured. As an offset to these advantages, it must be confessed, that there are greater temptations, than formerly, to luxury and dissipation; and it is to be feared, that a larger proportion fall victims to excess. But it is surely no argument against our obligations to gratitude, that the very abundance of heaven's blessings is suffered to increase our inclination to abuse them.

In point of advantages for the education of youth, what thanks are not due to him, who, in this respect, makes us to differ from our less favoured ancestors!

During the former part of this century, but little provision was made for publick schools. How incomparably more favoured are the present generation! Conveniences are now afforded for the poorest of our children to receive instruction, through the whole of the year. It accordingly happens, that, from the lowest walks of life, many become qualified to educate others. We cannot but acknowledge our obligations to the Most High for giving the present genera-

tion the disposition and the means so amply to provide for youthful instruction.

Our present civil and political blessings call for religious gratitude.

We enjoy unmolested our invaluable rights. We are favoured with the administration of good and wholesome laws. That baneful spirit of party, so destructive to the best feelings of the heart, so fruitful of discord and every evil work, is, in a great measure, suppressed. God grant, that it may be extinguished in the breast of every fellow citizen.

Seldom, if ever, has there been such general peace among the nations of the earth. What christian but must exult, that this favourable opportunity is so zealously employed for the distribution of the sacred scriptures? Blessed be God, that Bible Societies, throughout christendom, are vying with each other, which shall be most sedulous, impartial, and generous in this truly christian project. It is astonishing to read accounts of the exertions now making by the parent society* of all institutions of this kind, in the land of our fathers' sepulchres, to seek objects of charity, in the most desolate regions, to supply their necessities, and to excite all, who have the means, to unite in the same godlike enterprises! Even missionaries are sent forth, for this purpose, who cheerfully submit to every hardship, both by sea and land, to effect their munificent designs. Societies are also organizing of almost every description of benevolence, throughout the christian world, not only to disseminate the word of truth; but also to answer the calls of every kind of distress, and to contribute, in ways too numerous

* Allusion is here made to "THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY," and particularly to their thirteenth report, exhibited, last May.

to be particularized, to human comfort. So that the present has been not unaptly termed the era of benevolent institutions.

When our situation, in respect of religious privileges, is compared with that of the early settlements in this place, what thanks are not due to the Disposer of our lot!

For nearly a century, it was customary even for the women here to walk to the first parish in Roxbury to unite in publick worship.

"But we have no such lengths to go." Long have we and our fathers been furnished with a place of worhip as convenient, as the population of the town and the local situation of its inhabitants will allow. Nor are there but few families among us, who are not furnished with the means of safe and easy transportation to this house of our solemnities in unfavourable weather.

When the late venerable meeting house was first consecrated to publick worship, a principal part of the lower floor was divided into long seats, and heads of families were placed in situations, unconnected with their respective households.* In process of time, notwithstanding every improvement, of which the house was susceptible, it failed to accommodate the increased population of the town. With what wonderful unanimity did the Author of every good design inspire you to erect this commodious temple! Surely the contrast, in point of elegance, costliness, and convenience, between our present and former house of worship, indicate a striking improvement in your taste

* Appendix VI.

and circumstances, which impose correspondent obligations to gratitude.

2. While dwelling upon reflections, which lead us to advert to our fathers, let us imitate their acknowledged virtues.

Industry was a leading feature in their characters. By this they subdued the rugged soil, and fitted it for the more easy cultivation of their descendants. Shall we then surrender ourselves to inglorious ease, and thus lose the advantages to be derived from their successful toils?

Frugality was likewise in them a conspicuous trait. Like them, let us avoid profusion* in every form, that we may be furnished with the means of doing good and of preventing evil, as far as our influence can extend.

But they were remarkable for attention to religious institutions. Alas! how have their posterity degenerated from them in this respect! How many, instead of esteeming it a privilege, appear to account it a hardship to worship God in their families, or in his house; and avail themselves of the slightest pretexts to neglect the assembling of themselves together for religious purposes? How many seem much more desirous of vindicating their rights, than of performing their duties? Hence when any worldly object, which lies near their hearts, claims their attention, especially when called to a contested political election,† they are deterred by no obstacle, but such, as is inevitable,

* Especially in the unnecessary, wasteful, and destructive use of spirituous liquors, which are fraught with evils too numerous, and yet too obvious, to be mentioned.

† On many such occasions every individual is at his post. Alas! how much more faithful are men to their passions, than to the convictions of conscience, or even the commands of the Most High!

from giving their personal attendance, and exerting all their influence. But when invited to engage in religious exercises, what trivial excuses will not avail to detain them from the worship of their Maker!

Vain is it to object to this good example of our fathers, that the present generation excels them in some valuable properties. It is not to such objectors, that we must look for this excellence; but to those, who imitate the piety, as well as the other commendable qualities of our renowned ancestors.

That they had failings, their most zealous, yet intelligent panegyrists confess. But over these defects they, with filial affection, throw the mantle of charity, and propose, for a model, their exalted virtues.

From the solemn recollections, which this subject has revived, let us, my hearers, seriously consider, what most highly concerns us, as strangers and pilgrims here, yet probationers for eternity.

Let us not make provision for this world, as if it were our final home. Reason convinces us, that we are frail and transitory beings; and we cannot advert to the history of past times, without beholding many a melancholy comment upon this obvious, yet neglected truth.

If religion be of that importance, which is claimed for it by the word of God, it should be our first care to choose God for our portion and chief good, the Saviour, as the medium of the choicest blessings, that thus we may hope for heaven, as our everlasting abode.

I will close with remarks particularly relating to the church* of Christ in this place, whose history I have thus imperfectly given.

* Since the publication of the century discourse, Deac. Samuel Clark died, 29 March, 1814, æt. 62; and 1 May, 1814, his son Deacon Joshua Child Clark was chosen in his stead.

It is worthy of devout notice, that, from its organization to the present time, this church has had rest. Instances indeed have not been wanting, even from its early history, of those, who thought themselves wiser, than their teachers, and purer in their faith, than the body of the church. But, though some of them, especially under the ministry of the first pastor, appeared earnestly to court opposition; yet they have been permitted to withdraw themselves from the communion of this church, without censure, or remonstrance, and to seek an administration of ordinances more congenial to their taste, and a society of professing christians more consonant to their views.*

While other churches have, in many instances, been rent by intestine divisions, and have cherished bitter animosities toward their pastors, or among themselves, our ecclesiastical records are not disgraced by a single line to perpetuate the remembrance of such an unhappy state of things. No Council has been called to this place, except upon ordinary church business. Nor has this pacifick spirit been confined to the century under review; it was uniformly manifested, for nearly a century before, while our fathers worshipped, and were united, with a neighbouring church.

God grant, that this desirable union may continue without interruption; that we, and our children, and our children's children may imitate our fathers in the purity, the well tempered zeal, and the peaceableness of their worship and church discipline. May no "root of bitterness" spring up to disturb this happy order of things. May we be "valiant for the truth"; but, at the same time, "receive with meekness the ingrafted word," and "speak the truth in love." May our only

* Appendix VII.

contention be to "provoke one another to love and good works."

Beloved, "behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." "It is" grateful, as "the precious ointment," which sheds a delightful fragrance all around; refreshing, as the gentle "dew," which scatters verdure, fertility, and beauty, as it descends upon the fruitful soil. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God. Let us be at peace, among ourselves. If it be possible, as much as lieth in us, let us live peaceably with all men. Let us mark them, who cause divisions and offences, and avoid them. Let us follow after the things, which make for peace, and things, whereby one may edify another; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

APPENDIX.

I.

LIST of the original members of the church of Christ in Brookline, at its organization, 26 October, 1717.

I. James Allen, Pastor elect,
II. Thomas Gardner, Deacon,
III. John Winchester,
IV. Joseph White,
V. Josiah Winchester,
VI. Samuel Sewall,
VII. William Story,
VIII. Joseph Goddard,
IX. Thomas Stedman,
X. Joshua Stedman,
XI. John Winchester, son of III.
XII. Caleb Gardner, son of II.
XIII. Benjamin White, Deacon, son of IV.
XIV. Samuel White, son of IV.
XV. Amos Gates,
XVI. Ebenezer Kenrick,
XVII. Addington Gardner.

SISTERS.

XVIII. Mary Gardner, wife of II.
XIX. Joanna Winchester, wife of III.
XX. Hannah White, wife of IV.
XXI. Mary Winchester, wife of V.
XXII. Mary Boylston,
XXIII. Sarah Stedman,
XXIV. Desire Ackers,
XXV. Hannah Stedman,
XXVI. Rebecca Sewall, wife of VI.
XXVII. Abigail Story,
XXVIII. Mary Stedman,
XXIX. Sarah Winchester,
XXX. Abiel Gardner,
XXXI. Ann White, wife of XIV.
XXXII. Hannah Kenrick,
XXXIII. Tryphena Woodward,
XXXIV. Eunice Clark,
XXXV. Mary Gardner,
XXXVI. Susanna Gardner,
XXXVII. Elisabeth Boylston,
XXXVIII. Elisabeth Taylor,
XXXIX. Frances Winchester.

II.

Owners of dwelling houses in Brookline, in 1740. The names in italicks designate the houses, which still remain.

1. Solomon Hill,
2. *Capt. John Winchester,*
3. Samuel Sewall,
4. William Gleason,
5. *Capt. Robert Sharp,*
6. Clark,
7. *Thomas Aspinwall,*
8. *Deac. Thomas Cotton,*
9. *Major Edward White,*
10. Major Edward White,
11. Major Edward White,
12. Major Edward White,
13. *John Ellis,*
14. *Nathaniel Shepard,*
15. *Capt. Samuel Croft,*
16. *Major Edward White,*
17. *Isaac Winchester,*
18. Rev. James Allen,
19. Rev. James Allen,
20. Deac. Samuel Clark,
21. *Nathaniel Gardner,*
22. *Solomon Gardner,*
23. *Dr. Zabdiel Boylston,*
24. Nathaniel Seaver,
25. William Ackers,
26. Isaac Gardner,
27. John Seaver,
28. *Samuel White, Esq,*
29. *Joseph White,*
30. Deac. Benjamin White,
31. Benjamin White,
32. Joseph Adams,
33. Nathaniel Stedman,
34. *Ebenezer Sargeant,*
35. *Capt. Benjamin Gardner,*
36. Joshua Stedman,
37. Ebenezer Kenrick,
38. Nathaniel Hill,
39. *John Druce,*
40. Abraham Chamberlain,
41. *Abraham Woodward,*
42. Hugh Scott,
43. James Griggs,
44. William Davis,
45. John Harris,
46. *Isaac Child,*
47. Joshua Child,
48. Timothy Harris,
49. John Harris,
50. Daniel Harris,
51. John Newell,
52. Andrew Allard,
53. *John Woodward,*
54. Christopher Dyer,
55. Thomas Woodward,
56. Nehemiah Davis,
57. John Goddard,
58. *Henry Winchester,*
59. Elhanan Winchester,
60. John Seaver, jun.
61. Dudley Boylston.

By the above account it will be seen, that but twenty-two houses, which were standing, in 1740, now remain.

It will also appear, that but twelve of the present occupants of these sixty-one places are lineal descendants of their proprietors at the abovementioned date.

III.

It may gratify some to compare the owners of dwelling-houses, as last mentioned, with those of 1796.

1. *Joshua Griggs,*
2. William Marshall,
3. Samuel Griggs, &c.
4. Edward K. Wolcott,
5. Col. Thomas Aspinwall,
6. Edward K. Wolcott,
7. Robert Sharp,
8. *Stephen Sharp,*
9. *Dr. William Aspinwall,*
10. *Dr. William Aspinwall,*
11. Dr. William Aspinwall,*
12. Ebenezer Davis,
13. Benjamin Davis,
14. John Howe,
15. Josiah Jordan,
16. *Thomas White,*
17. *Thomas White,*
18. *Thomas White,*
19. Eleazer Baker,
20. Jonathan Dana,*
21. *James Holden,*
22. Capt. Cobb,*†
23. Daniel Dana,
24. Ziphion Thayer,
25. *Jonas Tolman,*
26. Capt. Samuel Croft,
27. Capt. Samuel Croft,
28. *John Robinson,*
29. *Enos Withington,*
30. Major Gardner,
31. Capt. Timothy Corey,
32. Edward K. Wolcott,
33. Samuel Clark,
34. The Parsonage,
35. David Hyslop,
36. John Goddard,
37. *David Hyslop,*
38. John Lucas,
39. John Lucas,
40. *William Ackers,*
41. *Isaac S. Gardner, Esq.*
42. *Ebenezer Heath,*
43. John Heath,
44. *Jonathan Jackson,*
45. *Hon. Jonathan Mason,*
46. Hon. Jonathan Mason,*†
47. Benjamin White,*
48. Benjamin White,
49. Benjamin White,
50. Caleb Gardner,
51. *Ebenezer Richards,*
52. *Jonathan Hammond,*
53. Thaddeus Hide,
54. Ebenezer Webb,
55. *Caleb Craft,*
56. *Thaddeus Jackson,*
57. Abraham Jackson,
58. Caleb Craft,*†

59. Jacob Hervey,
60. Elisha Whitney,*
61. *John Harris,*
62. Elisha Whitney,
63. Heirs of Thomas White,
64. Elijah Child,*
65. Widow Elisabeth Harris,
66. *Dr. William Spooner,*
67. John Corey,
68. *Joseph Goddard,*
69. Nathaniel Winchester,
70. Hon. George Cabot,
71. Hon. George Cabot,
72. Joshua Boylston.*†

The names in italicks represent the present owners. The houses of those, with an asterisk, are demolished. Those with an obelisk have others erected on, or near the site of former houses.

It will be perceived, that, within the short space of twenty-one years, precisely two-thirds of the houses have been demolished, or shifted owners.

IV.

Deaths for the last 21 years, 208.

Under 2 years,	33	Between 50 and 60,	13
Between 2 and 10,	27	60 and 70,	22
10 and 20,	12	70 and 80,	22
20 and 30,	27	80 and 90,	11
30 and 40,	14	90 and 100,	1
40 and 50,	26		—
			208

Diseases.

Consumption,	43	Jaundice,	6	Worms,	1
Fever,	33	Apoplexy,	5	Strangury,	1
Decay,	20	Cholera morbus,	5	Melancholy,	1
Dysentery,	10	In child bed,	3	Canker,	1
Dropsy,	9	Hooping cough,	3	Rheumatism,	1
Fits,	8	Quinsy,	2	Hernia,	1
Casualties,	8	Cancer,	2	Bilious colick,	1
Suddenly,	8	Suicide,	2	Uncertain,	17
Paralysis,	8	Tetanus,	2		—
Dropsy in brain,	6	Throat distemper,	1		208

V.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

Congregat. churches.	Pastors	Died in ministry.	Died out of ministry	Living in other places.	Present pastors.	Houses built	Additional churches.
Charlestown, 2	7	6	0	0	1	2	1
Dorchester, 3	6	1	2	0	3	4	2
Boston, 12	59	36	6	7	10	13	5
Roxbury, 3	11	6	2	0	3	4	1
Brookline, 1	5	3	1	0	1	1	0
Chelsea, 1	4	2	1	0	1	1	0
Total 22	92	54	12	7	19	25	9

Rev. Thomas Cheever,	93,	Dr. Benjamin Colman,	73,
Rev. Nehemiah Walter,	87,	Rev. Samuel Checkley,	73,
Dr. Increase Mather,	85,	Rev. Thomas Prince,	72,
Dr. Charles Chauncy,	82,	Rev. Thomas Foxcroft,	72,
Dr. Joseph Sewall,	80,	Dr. Ebenezer Pemberton,	72,
Rev. Thomas Prentice,	80,	Dr. Simeon Howard,	72,
Dr. Samuel Mather,	79,	Rev. Simon Bradstreet,	72,
Rev. John Danforth,	78,	Rev. Hull Abbot,	72,
Dr. John Lathrop,	77,	Dr. Samuel West,	70.

VI.

It may gratify some to be informed of the following particulars of the former meeting-house, and its earliest occupants.

It originally contained but fourteen pews; and these were all wall pews, disposed of to the following persons, 29 April, 1718.

I. Samuel Sewall, next the pulpit, West.
II. John Winchester, sen. West of No. I.
III. Capt. Samuel Aspinwall, North West corner.
IV. Lieut. Thomas Gardner, South of No. III.
V. John Seaver, between West door, and men's gallery stairs.
VI. John Druce, left of men's gallery stairs.
VII. Joseph Gardner, left of front door.
VIII. Josiah Winchester, sen. right of front door.
IX. Thomas Stedman, right of women's gallery stairs.

X. William Sharp, left of East door.
XI. Ensign Benjamin White, right of East door.
XII. Benjamin White, jun. North of No. XI.
XIII. Peter Boylston, North east corner.
XIV. Ministerial pew, right of pulpit stairs.

Account of the manner, in which the body and the gallery of the old meeting-house were seated, 9 March, 1719, from a paper found carefully folded between the upper and under floor of the Hon. Jonathan Mason's farm house, at its demolition, in 1809. Said house was built and first inhabited by Deacon Benjamin White, one of the first deacons of this church.

" In the men's foreseat in the body seats are seated Josiah Winchester, Capt. Aspinwall, Joseph Gardner, and Edward Devotion.

In the second seat are seated William Story, Joseph Goddard, Thomas Woodward, Daniel Harris, and John Ackers.

In the third seat are seated James Griggs, Samuel Newell, Abraham Chamberlain, Ebenezer Kenrick, and Robert Harris.

In the fourth seat are seated Thomas Lee, William Davis, and Joseph Scott.

In the front foreseat in the gallery are seated Caleb Gardner, Josiah Winchester, Samuel White, Henry Winchester, Joseph Adams, Robert Sharp, Thomas Cotton, and Samuel Clark, jun.

In the foreseat in the side gallery are seated Joshua Stedman, William Gleason, Dudley Boylston, Addington Gardner, John Taylor, Stephen Winchester, and Philip Torrey.

In the second seat in the front are seated Isaac Gleason, John Wedge, Thomas Woodward, jun. and James Goddard.

In the women's foreseat in the body seats are seated the wife of Josiah Winchester, sen. the widow Ackers, the wife of Joseph Gardner, and the wife of Edward Devotion.

In the second seat are seated the wife of William Story, the wife of Joseph Goddard, the wife of Thomas Woodward, the wife of Daniel Harris, the wife of John Ackers, and the widow Hannah Stedman.

In the third seat, the wife of James Griggs, the wife of Samuel Newell, the wife of Abraham Chamberlain, the wife of Ebenezer Kenrick, and the wife of Robert Harris.

In the fourth seat, the wife of Thomas Lee, the wife of William Davis, and the wife of Joseph Scott.

In the front foreseat in the gallery, the wife of Samuel White, the wife of Henry Winchester, the wife of Joseph Adams, the wife of Robert Sharp, and the wife of Samuel Clark, jun.

In the foreseat in the side gallery, the wife of Joshua Stedman, the wife of William Gleason, the wife of Dudley Boylston, the wife of Addington Gardner, the wife of John Taylor.

In the second seat in the front, the wife of John Wedge, and the wife of James Goddard."

Individuals seated 66, of whom 28 couples were men and wives.

VII.

This was particularly the case with several, during a period of great excitement, in the spring of 1744. They left Mr. Allen's church with heavy charges against him, his preaching, and his church. But no notice appears to have been taken of them or their charges. On this they set up new-light preaching, as it was called, and became most of them, in their turns, exhorters. The most distinguished among them was Mr. Elhanan Winchester, father of the celebrated preacher of the same name, who preached in Europe and America the doctrine of the restoration. The father was first a deacon among the new-lights, to whom Mr. Jonathan Hide was, for a season, a stated preacher, within the limits of Brookline. When Elhanan, jun. became a baptist, the father also joined this sect, and was immersed. The principal part of Mr. Hide's followers, one after another, became baptists, chiefly through the instrumentality of Deacon Winchester and son. But Mr. Hide, to his dying day, though forsaken by most of his adherents, persisted in his attachment to infant baptism. When Elhanan Winchester, jun. became a universalist, the father soon adopted the same faith. Some years after the death of the son, the father turned shaker, and died at Harvard, full in the faith, Sept. 1810, æt. 91. So that he was first a congregationalist, then a new-light, then a baptist, then a universalist, and at last a shaker. At the closing period of life, he sent intelligence to some friends in Newton, "In every other denomination, I have had my doubts; but now I am sure, that I am right."

VIII.

I shall improve this opportunity to point out a few mistakes, which have been detected in the Century Discourse from the incorporation of this town, delivered, 24 November, 1805.

From want of time properly to examine the town records of Boston, I supposed, in pp. 7 and 8, that grants of four and five acres at Muddy-river were made to the poor only; and that those, who had the allotments, of course became settlers. But my friend, James Savage, Esq. of Boston, has kindly corrected this errour. By a more thorough investigation of the subject, he has shown, that "very few of the grantees, whose names are found in the records, moved from the old town; and perhaps of the poor, who took up lots under the town's vote, many were not recorded in the town book."

See note on the Historical Sketch of Brookline, in the Historical collections, Vol. III. N. S. p. 284.

In p. 13, it is asserted, that Mr. Elhanan Winchester was the first minister of the baptist church in Newton. I have since ascertained, that he was never the stated pastor of that church. Indeed, he was too much of an itinerant to be *settled* in any place. But it is well known, that he was very active in producing the excitement, which led to its formation; and that he immersed numbers of those, who became members of that church.

In p. 19, a mistake is made in mentioning the last text of the Rev. Joseph Jackson. But five days before his death, he preached, all day, to his people; in the forenoon, from Heb. xiii. 5. "Be content with such things, as ye have." P. M. from Heb. xii. 15. "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God."

P. 25. Rev. Cotton Brown was ordained, 26 October, 1748.

P. 27. Rev. John White died, 16 January, 1760.

P. 28. Rev. Ebenezer White was minister of Norton, now Mansfield.

P. 30. Dr. Zabdiel Boylston's birth was, in 1679.